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A system and method is provided for generating menu/toolbar entities on a graphical user interface. An application is provided which can be displayed in a frame of a graphical user interface and which has a set of menu/toolbar entities. At any given time, the application can be in one of a plurality of application states. Information indicative of an application state characteristic for each application state of the application is contained in a data file, and each application state characteristic defines a display characteristic of at least one of the set of menu/toolbar entities. The system generates a displayed set of menu/toolbar entities on the graphical user interface based upon the application state characteristic of a current one of the application states of the application.